

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2006

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, July 10, 2006, was away from the House on business representing the constituents of the 11th Congressional District. During my absence, the House called rollcall votes Nos. 358, 359 and 360. Had I been present for the rollcall votes, I would have voted: "nay" on rollcall vote No. 360; "yes" on rollcall vote No. 359; "yes" on rollcall vote No. 358.

HONORING THE AMERICAN RED CROSS OF GREATER CHICAGO'S "READY WHEN THE TIME COMES" PROGRAM

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2006

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago's "Ready When the Time Comes" program. This program partners the Red Cross with corporate and community organizations to respond to disasters such as fires, storms, floods, and tornadoes. I would like to acknowledge Grainger, an Illinois-based company which has been the lead corporate sponsor of the Ready When the Time Comes program.

The Ready When the Time Comes program allows Chicago area organizations and businesses to help their community before, during and after a disaster by supplying the Red Cross with volunteers. At the time of a disaster, the Red Cross will notify the company or organization and inform them of the role volunteers will have in the relief effort.

Through Ready When the Time Comes, corporations allow their employees to receive free Red Cross training in disaster relief functions. In return, corporate partners commit to making their trained employees available for disaster service at least one day each year. During a large scale disaster, with a single phone call the Red Cross can deploy as many volunteers as needed. Throughout Chicago, Ready When the Time Comes volunteers have put their training to work responding to flooding, massive fires, heat emergencies, and even the terrorist attacks of September 11.

Since February 2001, Grainger has provided the Chicago Red Cross with almost 200 volunteers for the Ready When the Time Comes program. Following Hurricane Katrina, corporate employees were called upon to staff phone centers in Chicago to answer questions from those seeking support and information. These volunteers also participated in the Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications disaster preparedness drill in August 2005.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me to honor and recognize the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago's "Ready When the Time Comes" program. This program is a model on how easily partnerships can be developed to help safeguard our communities. I support the Red Cross's efforts to afford other

organizations the opportunity to partner with them to actively contribute to recovery efforts.

TRIBUTE TO THE BRONX DOMINICAN PARADE

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2006

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise and pay tribute to the seventeenth annual Bronx Dominican Parade and Festival which will take place Sunday, July 16, 2006. This famed event is eagerly anticipated by both Dominicans and the greater Bronx community every year. It is a wonderful celebration of the spirit and richness of Dominican culture.

Under the leadership of Felipe Febles and Rosa Ayala, the Bronx Dominican Parade, Inc., (La Gran Parada Dominicana de El Bronx) has grown into an important institution that increases the self awareness and pride of the Dominican people in order to promote economic development, education and cultural recognition.

As the second largest Latino community in New York City, Dominicans have made valuable contributions to the city, as well as to the entire nation. Although the highest concentration of Dominican people live in Washington Heights, a significant number have enriched the Bronx with their unique culture and spirit. Dominican culture is characterized by, among other things, diverse multi-culturalism, strong family values, distinctive art, rhythmic and soulful music and unique cuisine. I am grateful that so many Dominicans have made the Bronx their home.

Mr. Speaker, the roots of Dominican New Yorkers lie in a country with a rich history and arresting landscapes bound by water. The Dominican Republic is home to a number of people from various heritages. As a result, the culture is charged with strong African, Taino and European influences. One visit to the Dominican Republic will put to rest any questions one might have as to why Dominicans in America retain such a strong sense of pride in their homeland and never stop missing it.

The achievements and contributions made by the Dominican community has spanned the realms of politics, science, the Armed Forces, literature, public service, and the arts, undoubtedly making them an integral part of American society. The Bronx Dominican Parade and Festival is a great opportunity to celebrate the culture, history, and bright future of the Dominican people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please join me in honoring the 2006 Bronx Dominican Parade and Festival.

WOMEN LEADERS FOR PEACE: CODE PINK "TROOPS HOME FAST"

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter into the RECORD a press release and letter to Members of Congress from Troops Home

Fast, a new initiative of the peace organization CODEPINK whose members are holding a hunger strike to highlight their call to bring U.S. troops home from Iraq. I pay tribute to the members of CODEPINK who are participating in the Troops Home Fast and praise their creative efforts to assist our troops in Iraq and those wounded at Walter Reed Hospital by many campaigns protesting the continuing occupation of Iraq. One of their peace actions is a Friday night vigil at Walter Reed Hospital to protest the war and thus prevent further casualties. Today I especially want to bring attention to their latest campaign taking place here in the District of Columbia, around the country and around the world—the Troops Home Fast.

While many Americans were celebrating Independence Day with barbecues and fireworks, CODEPINK was launching this new campaign—a fast—calling for independence from war. Among the Washington Fasters are Cindy Sheehan, legendary comedian/civil rights activists Dick Gregory, activist/environmentalist Diane Wilson, former Army colonel Ann Wright, Iraq war veterans, Vietnam veterans, and whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg. They are joined by almost 3,500 others from other countries. Celebrities and other well-known public figures have committed to join including actors Susan Sarandon, Sean Penn and Danny Glover, musicians Graham Nash and Willie Nelson, and more. The group is supported by Gold Star Families for Peace and endorsed by other organizations.

The Fast ceremony began at Gandhi's Statue at Massachusetts Avenue and Q St., NW in Washington DC with a brief Rally and a March to Lafayette Park in front of the White House. The fasters in DC which included co-founders of CODEPINK Medea Benjamin, Jodie Evans, Gael Murphy and Cindy Sheehan were present as were other fasters including comedian and social activist Dick Gregory who has fasted for many causes.

On July 10, 2006, I received a letter sent tall members of Congress from Troops Home Fast calling themselves a "group of concerned citizens who are conducting an open-ended fast in front of the White House calling for our troops to come home from Iraq. . ." and asking for each member's help in this cause.

Troops Home Fast asks for the following: Legislation to set a time line for the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq and bring her troops home. In the opinion of the Troops Home Fast Congress is moving "far too slowly."

Troops Home Fast believes as I do and as Congressman MURTHA has repeatedly stated that the American people are way ahead of Congress. The polls show that a solid majority of the American people now want a time table and a quick end to our involvement in Iraq. They want American troops home.

According to a recent poll, 87 percent of Iraqis want their government to set a timetable for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Iraq's president, vice resident and national security advisor have all called for such a timeline. General Casey, the commander of American troops in Iraq has established a time table. It is only the President and his supporters in Congress who will not follow the will of the American people ho elected them, or the will of the Iraqi people who have spoken and whose democratic government has spoken for them who continue to refuse to hear anything but their own slog:

"Stay the Course" or "We will never give up until we have achieved victory" or the least excusable "we will stay and achieve victory so that our men and women who have died in Iraq will not have died in vain."

I honor those who are fasting as Gandhi did to bring about the change they believe is essential to preserve the character of this nation and to save the lives of Americans and Iraqis. I wish them great strength and pray with them for peace in Iraq.

JULY 11, 2006.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE, We are a group of concerned citizens who are conducting an open-ended fast in front of the White House calling for our troops to come home from Iraq, and we are asking for your support via the attached form.

The fast, called Troops Home Fast, was initiated by CODEPINK and Gold Star Families for Peace, and endorsed by dozens of organizations. It began on July 4, 2006, and more than 3,500 people in the U.S. and around the world are participating, with hundreds more joining every day. (Additional information about the fast is available at the website www.troopshomefast.org.)

You have the power to enact legislation to achieve the goal of this fast: set a timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq and bring the troops home. We deeply appreciate the efforts of members of the House and the Senate who have already been working to end this war.

But Congress is moving far too slowly. Every day, more American soldiers die, more Iraqis die, and more federal funds are squandered which could be used to alleviate a whole host of problems here in the United States.

We all know that a solid majority of the American people now want to bring our military involvement in Iraq to a quick conclusion and bring our troops home. Iraqis are even more adamant about ending the war quickly. A remarkable 87 percent of Iraqis want their government to set a timetable for U.S. withdrawal. Iraq's president, vice president and national security advisor have all called for such a timeline.

Americans who want to end this war have gone through all the traditional methods of petitioning the President and you, our members of Congress, to urge you to act. We have marched, done vigils, written letters, lobbied our representatives, and formed broad-based coalitions in an effort to bring this war to end. Yet the war goes on without end.

That's why we're here now in front of the White House, fasting. Fasting is a time-honored way to move people to action, from Gandhi's nonviolent liberation of India to Mitch Snyder's fasts for the homeless right here in Washington D.C.

We hope you will support our efforts and work with us to bring our troops home—FAST. Attached is a form to record your support. We thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

MEDEA BENJAMIN, JODIE EVAN

AND GAEL MURPHY,

On behalf of Troops Home Fast.

PRESS RELEASE

July 4, 2006.

Cindy Sheehan, Diane Wilson, Dick Gregory, Iraq veterans and Iraqi citizens gather in front of the White House on July 4th, their first day without food.

After eating their final meal in front of the White House yesterday, participants in the "Troops Home Fast"—a historic hunger fast organized by CODEPINK: Women for Peace and Gold Star Families for Peace—will spend their first day without food on the Fourth of July. They will gather at the White House at 10 a.m. and plan to hold a spiritual cere-

mony, send a message of peace to the Independence Day parade, and remain outside the White House with their message to bring the troops home from Iraq now.

Among the Washington fasters are Cindy Sheehan, legendary comedian/civil rights activist Dick Gregory, environmentalist Diane Wilson, former army colonel Ann Wright, Iraq war veterans, Iraqis and Pentagon whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg. They are joined by almost 3,000 others from around the United States and 18 other countries. Celebrities and other well-known public figures have committed to join the fast, including Susan Sarandon, Sean Penn and Danny Glover, musicians Graham Nash and Willie Nelson, writer Alice Walker, and more.

"While others are enjoying their barbecues and fireworks today, we will be going hungry for the most noble cause of all: peace," said Gold Star mother Cindy Sheehan, who began an open-ended fast today. "We are the true American patriots today. Our founding fathers cautioned future generations against engaging in wars of aggression for empire and economic gain, lest we lose our national soul. And the war in Iraq is exactly the kind of war our Nation's leaders once cautioned against."

The hunger strike will continue throughout the summer. "This fast has obviously touched a chord with the public," said CODEPINK cofounder Medea Benjamin. "We thought there might be 3 or 4 of us fasting, and it is more like 3,000. Every day hundreds of new people are signing up for the fast. Some communities are doing rolling fasts, each person taking a day. This is sparking a new level of commitment to get out of Iraq."

For more information, please see www.troopshomefast.org or meet the fasters in front of the White House at 10–11 a.m. or 5–7 p.m.

Support War Resisters! For the first time in the Iraq war, an officer in the U.S. Military, Lt. Ehren Watada, has publicly refused orders and will be brought to court-martial this summer. Click here for ways to show your solidarity and here to read a letter from Carolyn, Ehren's mom, and find out more about his case. You can also support Army Specialist Suzanne Swift, who suffered sexual harassment at the hands of her commanding officers and refused to return to Iraq. Click here for more info.

Declaration of Peace! We urge you to sign The Declaration of Peace, a pledge to take action against the war during September 21–28 if a peace plan is not established by that time. Declaration signers will take part in nonviolent action, marches, rallies, demonstrations, interfaith services, candlelight vigils and other creative ways to declare peace at the US Capitol and in cities across the US. Click here to sign the Declaration and learn more.

Mothers Declare Peace on Mother's Day! CODEPINK's 24-hour Mother's Day peace vigil was an amazing soulful, painful and joyful gathering. Cindy Sheehan, Susan Sarandon, Patch Adams, Dick Gregory, and Iraqi and Iranian mothers joined with mothers and others from all over the country to create a magical pink presence at the White House. Click here to see the media coverage & video, read our blogs and see the most beautiful photos imaginable! And click here to see reports from solidarity events that happened around the country.

CODEPINK Takes Out Ads in Iraqi papers! On Monday, May 15, CODEPINK placed ads in 8 Iraqi newspapers calling for Americans and Iraqis to work together, in a non-violent fashion, to end the occupation and bloodshed in Iraq. People in 99 cities generously funded this ad campaign. The Iraqi response has been tremendous, with hundreds of Iraqis calling the newspapers saying how excited

they are to see this ad and how it gives them great hope. Click here to see the ad. Click here to see the Arabic website Esteklal (which means independence). To see the press release about this ad, click here.

Stop Nuclear War With Iran! We weren't able to stop the last war, but we must stop the next one . . . NOW! The United Nations, which is mandated to uphold international law, must speak out against the Bush Administration's plans. Let's send a collective letter to Secretary General Kofi Annan imploring him to denounce this threat and call for a diplomatic solution. Click here to sign on and/or send your own, and pass it to friends and family around the world. Let's let the Bush administration and Kofi Annan know that the world is demanding an end to this madness!

Support Iraqi Women: The US invasion of Iraq has moved Iraq from a secular to a more religious—and violent—society where women's rights are being curtailed. Read our report Iraqi Women Under Siege and recent articles about women in Iraq. Click here to see the blogs, photos and media articles of the Iraqi Women's Tour to the US. Donate to our efforts to support Iraqi women.

Women—& Male Allies—Say NO To War! Sign here to join women and men from around the world who are coming together to SAY NO TO WAR. We are creating a massive movement crossing generations, races, ethnicities, religions, and borders to pressure our governments, the United Nations, the Arab League, and other international leaders to negotiate a political settlement to the war in Iraq.

Bring Our Guard Home Now! With over 70,000 National Guard troops deployed to Iraq, our homeland has been left vulnerable in the face of natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina. In response, CODEPINK is working with a coalition of peace groups to seek the immediate withdrawal of all National Guard troops from Iraq. At least twelve states are petitioning their governors to bring home our Guard! Click here to find out how you can join this effort and start a working group in your state!

Hurricane Katrina CODEPINK is now in New Orleans, working with the Common Ground Collective, the People's Institute for Survival & Beyond, various grassroots organizations and local neighborhood groups. We are part of an active movement to rebuild and revision the city, standing in solidarity with residents to strengthen their communities and take their cities back! We invite you to come down to participate in this massive and historic effort to rebuild this beautiful city from the bottom up and the inside out. Click here for more info, join our upcoming work brigade this summer and read Dana Balicki's blogs from New Orleans!

THE NEED FOR AN INCREASED NATIONAL FOCUS ON RAIL AND TRANSIT SECURITY

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2006

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, the terrible events of 9/11 brought intense scrutiny to security on our nation's aviation system and led Congress to enact significant measures to strengthen security both on airplanes and throughout airports. However, this same level of scrutiny has simply not been extended to the other transportation modes in our nation, particularly railroads and public transit systems.